

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 25, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush
President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush:

The H-2B visa program offers assistance to small businesses who cannot hire enough American workers during peak seasons. We ask that you, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Labor work with Congress to ensure that small businesses throughout the country can keep their doors open this year.

The H-2B visa was designed to provide access to non-immigrant, temporary workers for seasonal and peak load needs when no American workers can be found. These foreign workers offer short-term help and return to their home country at the end of their season. H-2B visas are capped at 66,000 visas per year. Even with 66,000 visas a year, it still does not meet the labor needs of seasonal businesses.

To help fill the additional needs, Congress established the H-2B returning worker program in 2005. Under this program, a worker who has received an H-2B visa in one of the three previous fiscal years is not counted against the 66,000 visa cap. Unfortunately, after three successful years the returning worker program expired on September 30, 2007.

By January 2, 2008, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) had already received enough applications to exceed the cap for H-2B visas for the second half of FY 2008. As a result, thousands of small businesses with peak seasons in late spring and summer will be locked out of the visa process. Many landscaping businesses, resorts, restaurants, carnivals, tourism industries, and other seasonal businesses will not have enough workers to meet their needs. Some businesses have already closed their doors.

H-2B workers and returning workers in particular have provided relief to the tourism industry, seafood processors, landscapers, resorts, pool companies, carnivals and other small and seasonal businesses across the nation. Reaching the second H-2B cap for fiscal year 2008 in January highlights the immediate need to extend the returning worker program to help these businesses fill their seasonal labor needs and keep full-time Americans working.


Without an immediate extension of the returning worker program, businesses will face labor shortages and increased economic hardship this year. While Congress is working on legislative options, we respectfully request that you, as President, use your Executive Authority to direct the Departments of


Homeland Security and Labor to continue the H-2B returning worker program as outlined in the 2005 legislation.

We look forward to your prompt reply to this request. If you have any questions, please contact Josephine Eckert with Congressman Bart Stupak's office at (202) 225-4735 or Erin Corcoran with Senator Barbara Mikulski's office at (202) 224-4654.

Sincerely,

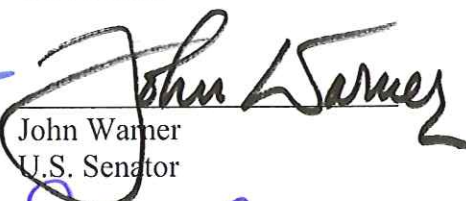

Bart Stupak
Member of Congress


Jim Gerlach
Member of Congress

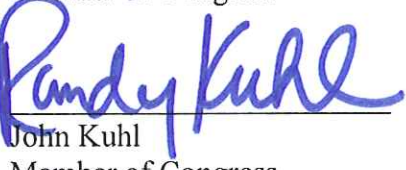

Barbara A. Mikulski
U.S. Senator

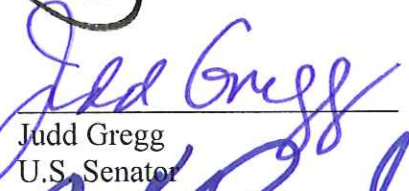

Bill Delahunt
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Henry Brown
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John Warner
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Donald Payne
Member of Congress


John Kuhl
Member of Congress

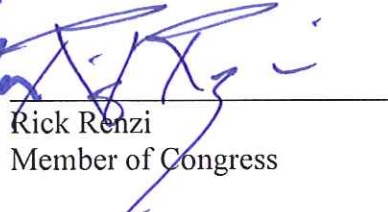

Judd Gregg
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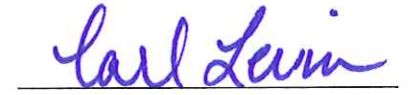

Virginia Foxx
Member of Congress


Tim Bishop
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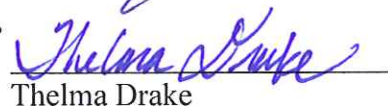

Christopher S. Bond
U.S. Senator

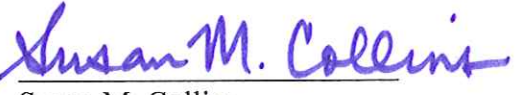

Candice Miller
Member of Congress

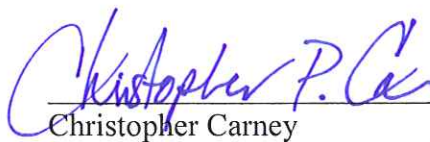

Rick Renzi
Member of Congress

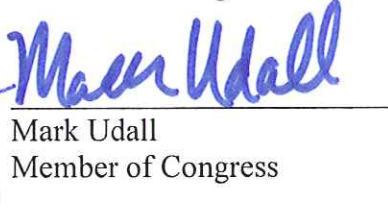

Carl Levin
U.S. Senator



Madeleine Bordallo
Member of Congress



Thelma Drake
Member of Congress

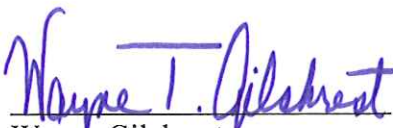

Susan M. Collins
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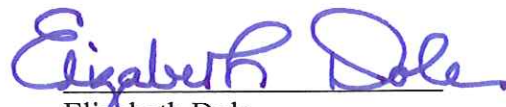

Christopher Carney
Member of Congress

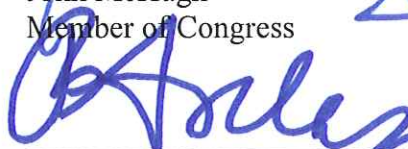

Mark Udall
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John McHugh
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Wayne Gilchrest
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Elizabeth Dole
U.S. Senator


Paul Hodes
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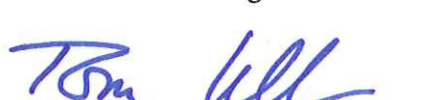

Joseph I. Lieberman
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Rodney Alexander
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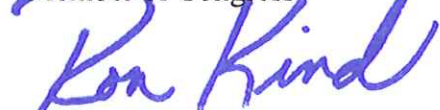

Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress

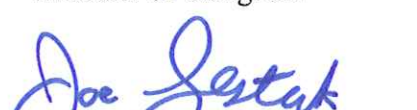

Patrick J. Leahy
U.S. Senator



Michael Castle
Member of Congress



Tom Allen
Member of Congress

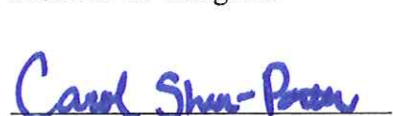

Barbara Boxer
U.S. Senator


Ron Kind
Member of Congress

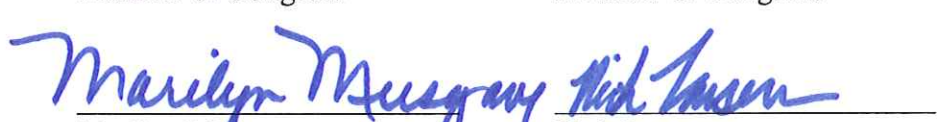

Joe Sestak
Member of Congress

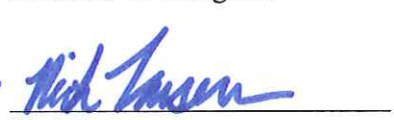

Wayne Allard
U.S. Senator


Joe Wilson
Member of Congress



Carol Shea-Porter
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Daniel K. Inouye
U.S. Senator


Marilyn Musgrave
Member of Congress

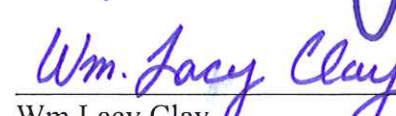

Rick Larsen
Member of Congress


Robert F. Bennett
U.S. Senator

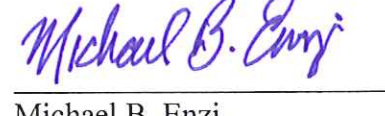

Charles Pickering
Member of Congress


Rob Bishop
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Mary L. Landrieu
U.S. Senator

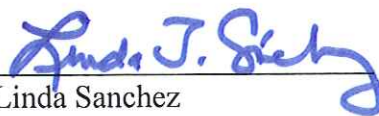

Wm Lacy Clay
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Charles Boustany
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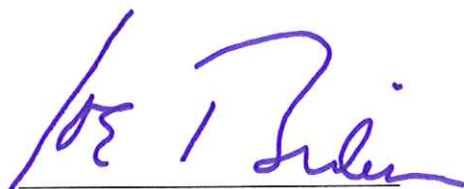

Michael B. Enzi
U.S. Senator



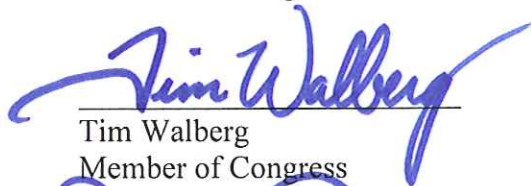
Steven Rothman
Member of Congress



Linda Sanchez
Member of Congress



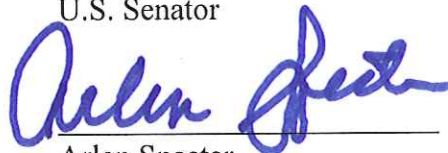
Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
U.S. Senator



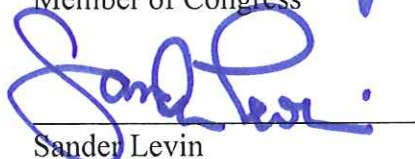
Tim Walberg
Member of Congress



Solomon Ortiz
Member of Congress



Arlen Specter
U.S. Senator



Sander Levin
Member of Congress



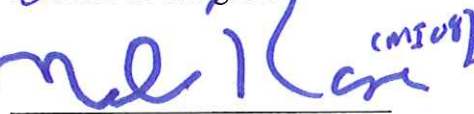
James Oberstar
Member of Congress



Ted Stevens
U.S. Senator



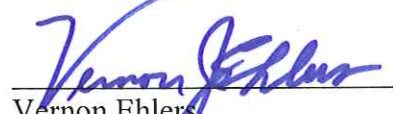
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Member of Congress



Mike Rogers
Member of Congress



Benjamin L. Cardin
U.S. Senator



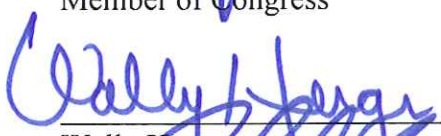
Vernon Ehlers
Member of Congress



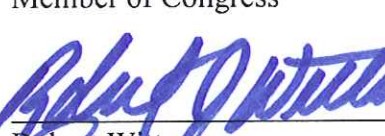
Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



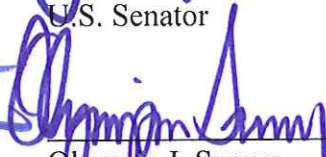
John E. Sununu
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Sheila Jackson-Lee
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Jeff Flake
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Earl Pomeroy

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Thad Cochran

Thad Cochran
U.S. Senator

Richard Burr

Richard Burr
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Ken Salazar

Ken Salazar
U.S. Senator

Amy Klobuchar

Amy Klobuchar
U.S. Senator

Elizabeth Cummings

Mark Shook

Henry Culler

Tim Murphy

Cc: The Honorable Michael Chertoff, Secretary of Homeland Security
The Honorable Elaine L. Chao, Secretary of Labor